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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 002478

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN HELICOPTERS FOR UNAMID

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto. Reason: 1.4 (B).

11. (C) Ethiopian Air Force Chief of Staff Major General Molla Hailemariam Alemayehu told SAO and PolOff on August 28 that Ethiopia was prepared to provide four MI-35 HIND helicopter gunships and two MI-17 HIP transport helicopters for the United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) peacekeeping force. General Molla said that the night vision issue for the MI-35s was being worked by Ethiopia, but he requested assistance from the United States to render the MI-17s night vision capable. He suggested that at least four or five MI-17s might need to be configured for the night vision to compensate for potential aircraft changes and replacement in the future. He could not provide a timeline for when the MI-35s might be ready for deployment. General Molla also asked that Washington provide the INMARSAT portable earth station as called for by the UN force requirements for Darfur. At the SAO's request, General Molla agreed to provide the SAO with a MI-17 flight engineer point of contact to allow the SAO to obtain the exact helicopter model and cockpit configuration so as to determine what modifications might be needed to render the aircraft compatible with the use of night vision goggles. Post will continue to pursue this issue with the Ethiopian government and coordinate with Washington as needed.
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